



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Recent recipients, Andrea Smith and son, Logan, with 'Diamond Dog', 'Chance.'

"Chance" with front feet on a training box.

# Diamonds in the Ruff of Virginia providing priceless service dogs

Diamonds in the Ruff of Virginia, Inc. places neglected, abandoned and displaced dogs into loving homes of individuals and families who are impacted by PTSD, depression, intellectual, developmental and other disabilities.

"Many dogs living in shelters have great potential to change a person's life," writes DITR Executive Director Tiffany Moeltner. "Through a careful screening, training, and placement process along with follow-up support, DITR aims both to reduce barriers to adoption by minimizing some of the initial stressors of adding a dog to the household, and to set dogs and their people up for a lifetime of happy and healthy companionship."

Using a template for bringing dogs in need together with the people that need them most, DITR works to improve the lives of both the dog and the person says Moeltner.

In addition to placing dogs with individuals and families directly impacted by disability, DITR places dogs with service dog training facilities and with individuals who will commit to registering them as therapy dogs that may visit

a wide variety of people in hospitals, assisted care facilities, and schools.

These key pathways give dogs the opportunity to play instrumental roles in the lives of those in need.

Moeltner has been working with service dogs for over eight years and has been a long-time Pet Partners registered handler with her therapy dog, 'Wookiee'.

"Whether a highly trained service dog or a well-mannered pet dog registered for therapy work, I have seen dogs change lives in numerous ways, Moeltner said. "They can bring people together. They can motivate us to participate in mentally, physically, and emotionally demanding activities. And they can simply provide the unconditional love we need to get us through life's challenges."

Dogs clearly have the potential to change lives. With over four million dogs entering our shelters each year DITR is well positioned to tap into this potential, improving the lives of shelter dogs by giving them the opportunity to play instrumen-

tal roles in enhancing the lives of people in need.

DITR currently seeks shelters and rescue groups to collaborate, as well as short-term fosters and sitters, dog-walkers, and persons to help with shelter dog evaluations and applicant screenings.

DITR is accepting applications for receipt of a 'Diamond Dog' from people living within a 50-mile radius of Blacksburg and Roanoke.

For information about Diamonds in the Ruff of Virginia, Inc., interested persons may visit its new website, [www.diamondsintheruffvirginia.org](http://www.diamondsintheruffvirginia.org), or DITR's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/diamondsintheruffvirginia](http://www.facebook.com/diamondsintheruffvirginia).



A recipient, Kenneth Altizer, with newly placed senior companion dog, 'Brownie.'